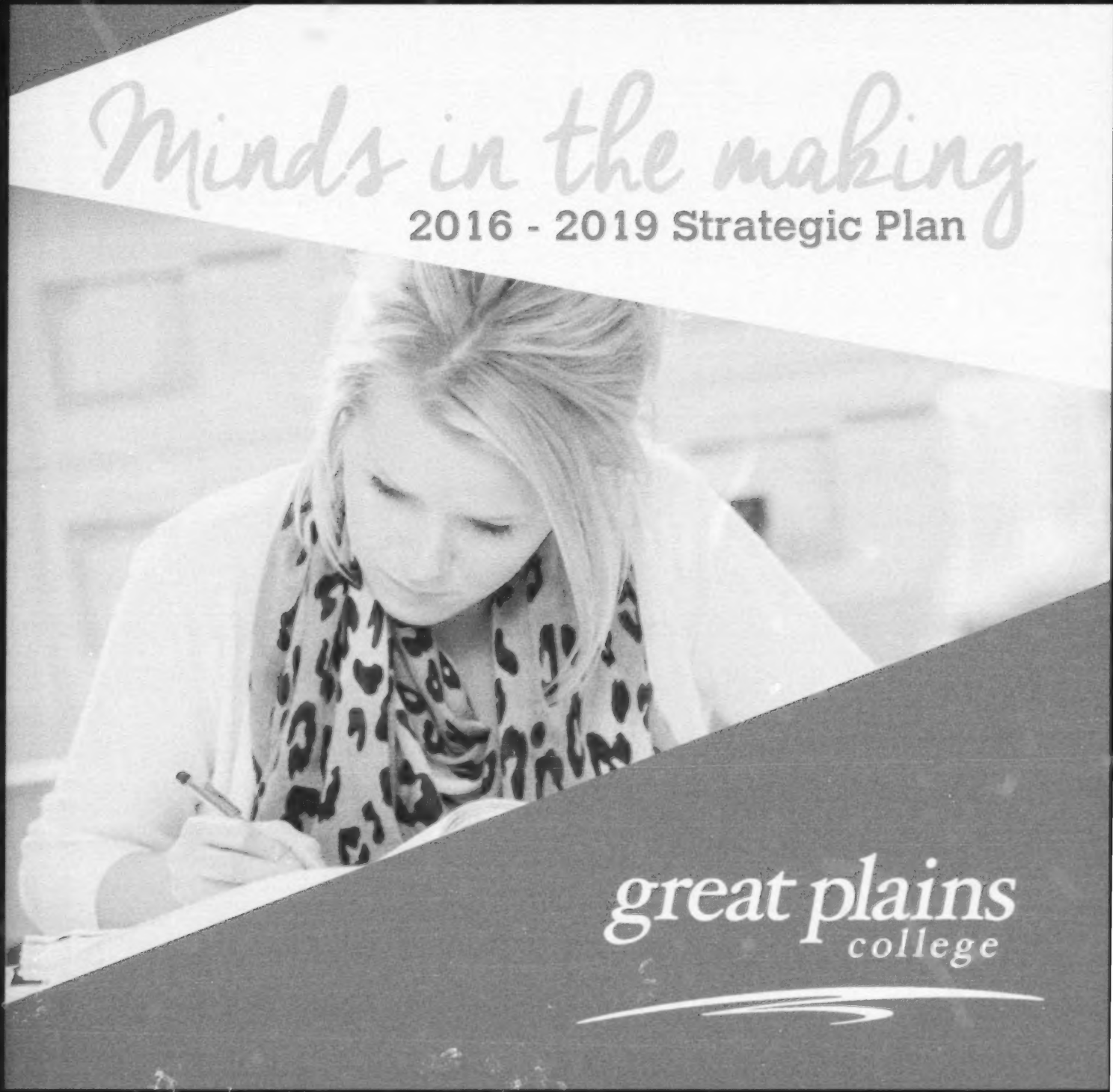
Minds in the making

2016 - 2019 Strategic Plan



great plains college

Message from the Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer

Great Plains College is an institution committed to being a leader in post-secondary education and labour market development in Saskatchewan. As Saskatchewan's population and economy continues to grow, so do the needs of our learners, partners, employers and stakeholders. The following strategic plan, "Minds in the Making," addresses these needs and enables Great Plains College to chart its course for future success in our thriving, dynamic province.

Great Plains College's newly refined strategic plan respects and builds on the integrity of our previous strategic plan and provides more accountability through clearly defined goals, objectives and success measures. Our strategic plan also considers the provincial government's overall strategy for economic growth and prosperity to 2020; our goals and objectives aim to assist the province in meeting its goals through education and training initiatives.

Over the next three years, our refreshed strategic directions will focus on the continued development of our most important assets: our people and our programs. Our people—students and employees—are at the heart of our business and we aim to optimize student and employee success which will result in the long-term accomplishments of Great Plains College as a whole. In addition to this, our program pillars—building partnerships and responding to labour market demands—fulfil our mandate and passion for providing valuable education and training programs to meet student needs along with business and industry requirements for qualified, skilled labour.

The following document is a reflection of the time, efforts, ideas and energy that staff, board members and stakeholders have contributed to make this strategic plan a reality. We sincerely thank all of those who participated in this process for their contributions to help create and define our future. Together over the next three years, Great Plains College will embark on its latest journey toward achieving our vision of *"growth, prosperity and quality of life through education and training"* for all that work with our organization.

George Janzen, Board of Governors

David Keast, President & CEO

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About Great Plains College

Great Plains College is at the leading edge of Saskatchewan's regional college system. The college is focused on meeting the needs of learners, employers and communities in Saskatchewan. By meeting those needs, we are working to build stronger leaders, careers, partnerships and communities.

Great Plains College is one of seven Saskatchewan colleges in the provincial regional college system. Saskatchewan regional colleges are an important component in helping grow their respective regional economies as well as the province as a whole.

According to an April 2015 study conducted by Praxis Research, college students, graduates and the operations of Saskatchewan regional colleges contributed the following to the Saskatchewan economy in 2012-13:

- **4,041 jobs within Saskatchewan**
- **$367.4 million in provincial gross domestic product, including $173.2 million in new wages and salaries in Saskatchewan**

The Great Plains College region spans the southwestern part of Saskatchewan and includes over 115,000 people and more than 100,000 square kilometers. There are multiple campuses and program centres in various communities serving approximately 4,500 full-time, part-time and casual students annually.

With a decentralized, three-region college structure, major campuses are located in Kindersley, Swift Current and Warman with additional program centres located in Biggar, Rosetown, Maple Creek and services in Whitecap Dakota First Nation. Throughout our locations, we offer a number of post-secondary certificate, diploma and degree programs as well as university courses, Skills & Safety Training, Adult Basic Education and English language training.

In addition to providing quality classroom experiences, Great Plains College also provides numerous student supports, tutoring and exam invigilation services. To meet the needs of the regional labour market and its employers, Great Plains College also offers customized training for business and industry to meet their training needs locally. Industries such as oil and gas, agriculture, health, hospitality, retail and service industries are supported by Great Plains College through its classroom and customized training efforts.

The Strategic Plan: Minds in the Making

In early March 2015, the Great Plains College Board of Governors and senior management team initiated the college's 2016-19 strategic planning process. The goal of the new strategic planning process was to examine progress made on the existing strategic plan and identify if the current strategic directions would continue to guide Great Plains College into the future.

The strategic planning process included consultations with numerous stakeholders including board, staff, partners, high school counsellors and principals and alumni-donors. The consultation process was completed through the use of multiple surveys and interviews to provide valuable feedback to help determine the future direction of the college as a whole. The results of the consultation process were analyzed by the board and senior management team and incorporated into the development of the strategic plan at a comprehensive planning session held on June 3, 2015. The strategic planning session also included completion of an environmental scan and in-depth discussions on the vision, mission and strategic directions of Great Plains College into the future.

The resulting strategic plan has been developed combining all efforts, feedback and a shared vision for Great Plains College as a whole, rather than focusing on individual campuses or on the individual regions they represent. The new strategic plan continues to build on the successes evident from the previous strategic plan and the progress made in its four strategic priority areas. The strategic priority areas continue to focus on the student, Great Plains College staff, building partnerships and responding to industry and community needs.

The strategic plan has developed a shared vision for Great Plains College as a whole, rather than focusing on individual campuses.

Internal Environmental Scan

Environmental Scan

As part of the strategic planning process, the board and senior management team conducted an environmental scan to assess the internal and external environment in which Great Plains College currently operates. The outcomes of the environmental scan have been outlined and were considered when setting the strategic direction and subsequent goals of Great Plains College for 2016-19.

The strengths of Great Plains College include:

- Program growth: business certificate (Swift Current and Warman) and proposed diploma (Swift Current), expanded trades training, facilitating training in hospitality, gaming and tourism, expansion in power engineering, expanded training in practical nursing and more clearly defined pathways and articulation in university programming.
- Marketing and recruitment efforts.
- Positive reputation among students, employers and community stakeholders.
- The achievement of 'designated' status for acceptance of International students.
- Increased scholarship and fundraising efforts.
- Provision of links between students and employers.
- Enhanced student life through SunDogs sports programs.
- Existing board and staff at Great Plains College.

The weaknesses of Great Plains College include:

- The ability to attract, compensate and retain additional qualified and experienced staff, particularly at the senior management level and some key instructional positions.
- The lack of overall organizational capacity (varied skill sets, limited financial resources for additional staff).
- The possibility of insufficient STA funding to cover a three-year program plan beyond 2015-16.
- The cost of and funding for infrastructure maintenance and renewal (facilities, IT and other capital needs).
- Insufficient opportunity for student–employer interaction.

External Environmental Scan

The opportunities of Great Plains College include:

- Growth in continuing education and business development through partnerships with the private sector, particularly those that access the Can-SK Job Grant.
- Partnerships with local businesses and the community to assist with large capital projects.
- Key initiatives from the government such as the report on credit granting to help address the problem of autonomy in regional colleges.
- The achievement of 'designated' status for acceptance of International students.
- Developing key messages to provide input to government on regional college improvements.

The threats of Great Plains College include:

- The recent economic downturn and impact on the oil and gas sector and on the regional economy and the demand for training.
- Lack of autonomy within regional colleges around programming decisions and inability to accredit programs and courses.
- Current Student Information System (SIS) challenges using prescribed government student software systems such as OCSM.
- Challenges of reporting to two Ministries around policy development, funding and knowledge transfer in post-secondary education.

Our existing board and staff are a strength of the college.

VISION

"Growth, prosperity and quality of life through education and training."

MISSION

"To build careers, partnerships and communities in Saskatchewan."

Regional College Mandate

The Saskatchewan Regional Colleges Act defines the legislative mandate of all regional colleges in Saskatchewan. The Act currently states:

"A regional college may provide educational services or programs that fall within the following general categories: (a) university and technical institute courses provided by way of a contract between the college and a university or technical institute; (b) training programs that prepare individuals for a career or provide education with respect to health or social issues; (c) training programs paid wholly or partly by private businesses, non-profit groups or government agencies; (d) career services; (e) adult basic education, literacy and upgrading programs; (f) any other educational activities that the Lieutenant Governor in Council may prescribe in the regulations."

Values

ACCESSIBLE
The college's programs and services are accessible to learners in ways that overcome barriers of time, location and personal circumstances.

COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE
The college values excellence in service and quality learning experiences for students. The college strives to be known for excellence in programming that addresses the needs of industry and students. As part of its commitment to excellence, the college Board, management and staff strive to be transparent and accountable as a publicly funded institution.

COLLABORATIVE
The college supports and engages in authentic and innovative partnerships to advance the opportunities for the students, employers and communities it serves.

RESPONSIVE
The college responds to economic and social change and adapts its programs to meet the needs of employers, the labour market, individuals, communities and public policy direction throughout the region. The college is agile in its response to changing community, public policy and labour market needs.

SUPPORTIVE
The college recognizes and respects a diversity of needs, cultures, values and contributions in all of its stakeholder groups. It strives to provide a supportive and stimulating environment for students and employees.

Strategic Directions 2016 - 2019

As part of the strategic planning process, Great Plains College employees, stakeholders and alumni-donors were consulted to provide feedback and direction on the existing 2012-15 strategic directions of the college. The majority of responses by these groups indicated that the existing four strategic directions were a good fit with who Great Plains College is as a regional college.

At the board and staff strategic planning session on June 3, 2015, the existing pillars of: optimize student success; provide program growth through partnerships and investments; deliver education and training to support regional labour market development; and value employees were slightly refined for better clarity and understanding of Great Plains College's future strategic directions. The four refined strategic directions focus on people and programs to continue to build on the progress being made at Great Plains College.

Strategic Directions

Optimize Student Success

Deliver Education to Meet Labour Market Demand

Value Employees

Build & Enhance Partnerships

Economic Growth

From 2004-14, Saskatchewan's gross domestic product (GDP) grew on average by 2.5 per cent per year, making it one of the leading provinces in Canada in economic growth over this time frame. Saskatchewan's economy in 2014 can be broken down by sector: 55.4 per cent services; 21.9 per cent mining, oil and gas; construction 7.9 per cent; agriculture 6.5 per cent; and manufacturing at 6.5 per cent (source: Saskatchewan Ministry of the Economy, 2015). Over the next three years, GDP growth is expected to continue at a slightly lower rate (due to the current downturn in oil and gas industry) but will continue to grow due to the strength of Saskatchewan's diversified economy.

Economic growth contributes to the overall success of Great Plains College, as growing industries will continue to require qualified, skilled labour to meet employment needs. For the college to capitalize on the strength of Saskatchewan's diversified economy, it must continue to diversify its program and service offerings.

Provincial Context

There are a number of factors that contribute to the overall success of educational institutions in Saskatchewan. In order for Great Plains College to achieve its vision of "growth, prosperity and quality of life through education and training," the college's programs, services and priorities must respond to and reflect the trends related to Saskatchewan's economic growth, population growth, demographics, labour market and government policy.

Growth presents an opportunity to recruit, educate and train more people.

Population Growth

Saskatchewan's population estimate in January 2015 was 1,132,640 people, which is an increase of over 17,000 people from the previous year. The population in the two cities and four towns that encompass Great Plains College's campuses and program centres has also grown significantly over time. Statistics Canada census data from the 2006 to 2011 census showed that Swift Current's population increased by 3.7 per cent to 15,503 people; Warman's population increased by 48.5 per cent to 7,084 people; Biggar's population increased by 6.3 per cent to 2,161 people; Kindersley's population increased by 6 per cent to 4,678 people; Rosetown's population increased by 1.8 per cent to 2,317 people, while Maple Creek's population decreased slightly by 1 per cent to 2,176 people.

Saskatchewan's population growth is expected to continue over the next three years due to the strength of the economy and the subsequent need for both skilled and unskilled labour. Population growth presents the college with an opportunity to recruit, educate and train more people from diverse backgrounds to enhance the overall makeup of the labour market in the region and beyond.

Demographics

According to Statistics Canada census data, Saskatchewan's working age population (those aged 15 to 64) increased by 8.03 per cent from 2006 to 2011, resulting in an increase of 50,665 working-age people. The working-age population accounts for 65.98 per cent of Saskatchewan's population with a median age of 38.2 years in 2011 (decreasing slightly from 2006). The gender makeup of Saskatchewan people in 2011 was 50.5 per cent male (a slight decrease from previous census) and 49.50 per cent female (a slight increase from previous census). In addition to this, Saskatchewan's population of seniors (aged 65 and over) grew by 2.95 per cent by 2011 over the previous census.

The demographic makeup of Saskatchewan's population is another important consideration for Great Plains College. A decreasing median working age suggests that a younger workforce may require additional, diversified education, while a growing population of seniors may lead to continued opportunities in the health care and nursing fields.

Labour Market

According to the Saskatchewan Ministry of the Economy, Saskatchewan continues to lead the country in employment growth. In May 2015, Saskatchewan's unemployment rate was 4.9 per cent (seasonally adjusted) compared to the national average of 6.8 per cent. The province has consistently had the lowest employment rate in Canada for the past twenty months. The low unemployment rate is due to the strength of the economy, even with the recent downturn in the oil and gas industry.

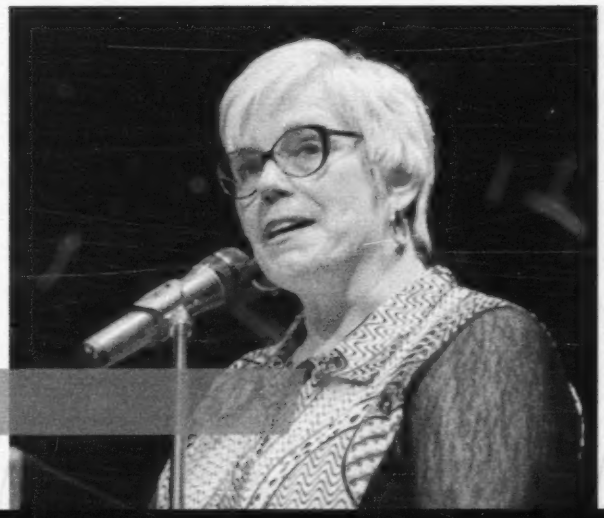
In 2014, Saskatchewan's labour market showed that overall employment increased by 1.9 per cent over the previous year; wage rates were the second highest in Canada at $25.37/hour and the fastest growing industry groups were utilities, the resource sector, construction and finance. Employment increased by 2.1 per cent among men and 1.7 per cent among women in 2014, with dramatic increases in employment of older workers (increase of 11 per cent among those 65 years of age and older) and in young adults working due to immigration, growing Aboriginal populations and the echo generation (source: Sask Trends Monitor, 2014).

Saskatchewan's growing labour market needs present an opportunity for Great Plains College to provide education and training programs that meet the demand for skilled labour in growing industries. The college covers a large geographic area in the province, making its regional labour market diverse in nature. Current demand in the region includes trades, health and nursing, oilfield/mining and general business.

Government Policy

The Government of Saskatchewan provides Saskatchewan Regional Colleges with their mandate and is their primary source of funding for operations, capital acquisitions and programming. As a publicly funded institution, Great Plains College works within a framework shaped by government policies, supports and funding structures.

For Great Plains College to be successful in achieving its strategic directions and vision, it must operate within a favourable government environment. In turn, Great Plains College continues to be accountable to government for its share of public resources for college operations and programming. The college continues to improve its institutional processes, as well as to clearly define its goals, objectives and success measures to ensure that human and financial resources are aligned with stakeholder needs and the needs of the province.



Strategic Direction: Optimize Student Success

GOAL #1: IMPROVE PATHWAYS TO MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT OR FURTHER EDUCATION.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Monitor retention and graduation rates and develop corrective responses in areas of concern.
2. Increase access to employment opportunities and job search support for students.
3. Foster and develop partnerships that connect students to employment.
4. Increase and enhance the utilization of pathways to further education opportunities.
5. Support international students in achieving post-secondary certification at our campuses.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

- Continued growth in retention and graduation rates.
- Students attain employment as a result of training and employer connections.
- The number of students that ladder from their college program to other educational opportunities increases.

GOAL #2: ENRICH STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Pursue best practices in student engagement.
2. Pursue best practices in teaching and learning.
3. Build capacity to accommodate students with special needs and barriers to success.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

- Increased exposure to Indigenous learning opportunities is provided.
- The learning environment is oriented toward 'deep learning'.
- Students and staff are provided with expertise and support when accommodating for barriers to success.

Strategic Direction: Optimize Student Success

GOAL #3: ENHANCE STUDENT LIFE.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Increase student extra-curricular activities.
2. Develop maintenance and renovations plans for facilities and equipment.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

- Empowered students who are active leaders in the life of the college.
- Varsity athletics is a successful and sustainable program.
- Maintenance and renewal processes are in place for facilities, equipment and technology.

GOAL #4: INFORM PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS OF EDUCATIONAL CHOICES THROUGH MARKETING, COMMUNICATION AND RECRUITMENT.

OBJECTIVES

1. Augment the website to include acceptance of fees and online registration.
2. Collaborate with referral agencies to increase awareness of educational opportunities.
3. Strengthen marketing and communication with potential student bases.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

- Target enrolments are met.
- Learners are able to register and pay for their programs and-or courses online.
- Referral agencies are aware of college programs and are directing clients to the college.

Strategic Direction: Deliver Education to Meet Labour Market Demand

GOAL #1: IDENTIFY AND DELIVER QUALITY PROGRAMS AND TRAINING TO MEET REGIONAL INDUSTRY NEEDS.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Develop a five year academic plan that is regionally sensitive and contributes to Saskatchewan's plan for growth.
2. Develop quality assurance mechanisms and practices to ensure excellence in learning.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

- The Academic Plan exhibits innovative thinking, consultation with industry and stakeholders and a firm commitment to core principles as the college develops and delivers new programs.
- College-wide and program-specific quality assurance procedures are developed.

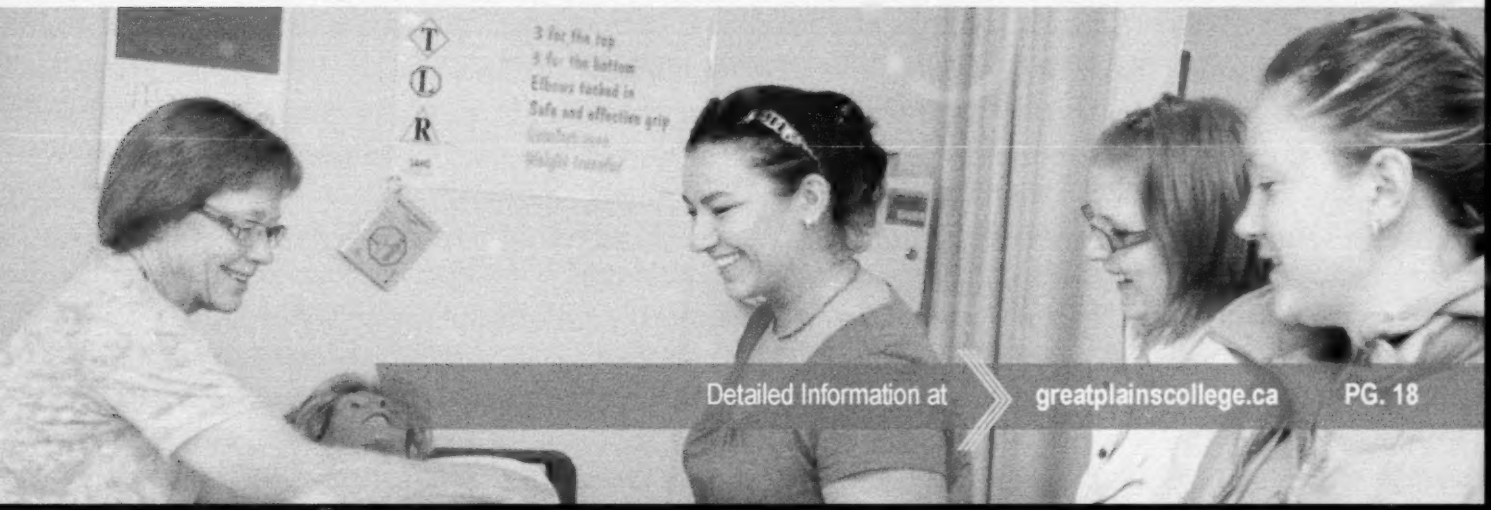
GOAL #2: ENGAGE WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS TO DEFINE LABOUR MARKET NEEDS AND TRENDS.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Conduct environmental scans to stay current with regional industry needs.
2. Work with industry stakeholders to define opportunities for business development and customized training.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

- The college's knowledge of industry needs remains current and informs program planning and strategic decision making.
- Additional training initiatives emerge from partnerships with business and industry.



Strategic Direction: Value Employees

GOAL #1: PROMOTE A SAFE, COLLABORATIVE AND RESPECTFUL WORK ENVIRONMENT.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Improve management structure and definition of roles.
2. Create avenues for employee interaction and engagement.
3. Reinforce safety and security protocols.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

- Management structure and supports are aligned with the college's strategic directions.
- Working groups that promote interaction and engagement are supported.
- Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) and Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) procedures are implemented in all college locations.

GOAL #2: ENCOURAGE PROFESSIONAL GROWTH TO BUILD ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Establish a culture of lifelong learning.
2. Strengthen technologically-informed learning within a multi-campus college.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

- Increased formal and informal opportunities for professional development are designed to enhance the college's mission.
- A Technology in Teaching and Learning plan is established.

GOAL #3: RECOGNIZE EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Celebrate success in the workplace.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

- Staff achievements are highlighted in college publications and media.
- Investment in staff recognition events is continued.

Strategic Direction: Value Employees

GOAL #4: IMPROVE INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

OBJECTIVES:

1. Promote timely, accurate and consistent communication within the organization.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

- Efficient methods of communication are identified and utilized.
- SharePoint is further developed as an effective source of internal communication.

Strategic Direction: Build & Enhance Partnerships

GOAL #1: INCREASE EXTERNAL FUNDING TO ASSIST WITH INSTITUTIONAL OPERATIONS AND PROGRAMMING.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Work with provincial and federal agencies to secure increased funding in areas of college priority.
2. Cultivate new contributors and provide outstanding donor stewardship.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

- Funding is accessed to support programming to meet labour market demand.
- Donor support and fundraising goals are attained.
- Stakeholders are connected and involved with the college's development and fundraising initiatives.

GOAL #2: PROVIDE INPUT TO ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT ON COLLEGE GROWTH AND ACCOUNTABILITY.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Collaborate with provincial ministries to enhance tools for registration and student life cycle management.
2. Advocate for improved alignment of government policy and funding to prepare students for the provincial labour market.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

- An effective Student Information System is sourced and an implementation plan is in place.
- Government policy and funding aligns more effectively with college programming and labour market demand.

Looking Forward

Great Plains College's 2016-19 strategic plan provides the framework and direction to achieve its vision of "growth, prosperity and quality of life through education and training" over the next three years and beyond. However, the strategic plan is only one component in the larger picture required to meet the college's bold vision for the future.

The strategic plan is intended to provide the basis for individual and collective decision-making and to guide both the individual and collective actions of the college. The strategic directions will be incorporated into the Great Plains College business plan, department plans and individual work plans to secure future success and growth as an organization. Operational, budget and capital planning will also take into account the strategic directions and goals of the college moving forward.

Looking forward over the next three years, Great Plains College will continue to build on its strengths and explore new opportunities for the success of its people —students and staff —and its programs by building partnerships and responding to labour market demands. Growing its overall capacity will ensure that Great Plains College continues to meet the needs of the students, business and industry and its stakeholders both now and in the future.

Detailed Information at greatplainscollege.ca PG. 22

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